Demand and supply of steel commodity

*227. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the fact that the demand for the steel commodity is growing whereas the supply is less;

(b) whether Government has taken any steps to bridge the gap between demand and supply of this commodity;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) The production and consumption figures of steel products for the period April-January of 2007-08 indicate that the rate of growth of steel consumption in the domestic market is higher than that of domestic production, as compared to the same period during 2006-07 as below:—

(in million tonnes)

	Finished Steel		
	April-Jan. 2006-07	April-Jan. 2007-08	% Increase
Production	40.415	42.475	5.1
Consumption	34.954	39.375	12.6
Export	3.905	3.902	-0.1
Import	3.339	5.679	70.1

(b) to (d) The role of the Government in a deregulated sector like steel is only that of a facilitator. As a facilitator Government takes measures from time to time to improve availability of steel in the domestic market. Some of the steps taken in this regard are as follows:—

(i) The Government has over the years reduced the import duty on steel to the current level of 5%.

(ii) The import duties on steel making inputs have also been reduced over the years and also exempted in case of coking coal. In case of iron ore it has been reduced to 2%.

(iii) In the Union Budget 2008-09 the import of melting scrap has been exempted from import duty.

(iv) Union Budget 2008-09 has also reduced customs duty on capital goods for project import from 7.5% to 5%.

(v) In order to ease the supply of iron ore to domestic steel producers Government has imposed an export duty at the rate of Rs. 300 per tonne on export of all varieties iron ore lumps. Export duty has also been imposed at the rate of Rs. 300 per tonne on export of iron ore fines with more than 62% Fe content and at the rate Rs. 50 per tonne on export of iron ore fines with less than 62% Fe content.

(vi) In order to promote the domestic steel industry, Government have constituted an Inter-Ministerial Group, under the chairmanship of Secretary (Steel), to monitor

and coordinate the issues concerning major steel investments in the country related to infrastructure, raw material supply, environmental clearance and other resource constraints.

(vii) The steel production capacity in the country is estimated to be 124.06 million tonnes by the year 2011-12. The break up of estimated capacity in respect of major steel producers is given below:—

(In million tonnes)

Investor	Existing Capacity	Expansion Plan		Total Capacity 2011-12 (Most Likely)
		Brownfield	Greenfield	
Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL)	12.84	12.00	-	24.84
Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd. (RINL)	2.90	3.90	-	6.80
Tata Steel	5.00	5.00	3.00	13.00
Essar Steel Holdings Ltd.	4.60	3.90	6.00	14.50
JSW Steel Ltd.	4.10	6.90	-	11.00
Jindal Power & Steel Ltd.	1.20	4.80	4.45	10.45
Ispat Industries Ltd.	3.00	2.00	-	5.00
Other & Secondary Steel	23.20	2.00	13.27	38.47
TOTAL:	56.84	40.50	26.72	124.06

Sale of gender identification kits

*228. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN:
SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that gender identification kits are available for sale by a US based company through a website; and

(b) if so, the steps Government is contemplating either to ban the website in the country or regulate its sale in the country?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS): (a) and (b) The declining sex ratio is a matter of great concern and calls for concerted action from all quarters. In order to contain the menace of female foeticide and ushering in a healthy sex ratio in the Country, the Central Government enacted the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994. The Act, *inter alia*, provides for stringent action against individuals and genetic laboratories/clinics offering sex determination services. Similar penalty provision also exists for those who seek such services.

2. Various mechanisms have been evolved at the national, State and district levels to ensure strict compliance of the provisions of the Act by all stake holders through periodic inspection and monitoring.

3. The advent of internet e-communication has emerged as a new threat in this regard. It has been reported that some of the overseas agencies are freely posting advertisements pertaining to sex determination services and wares. For instance, web sites like the 'www.GenSelect.com; www.4-gender-selection.com, *www.pregnancystore.com*, etc., are offering sex determination kits called the'baby Gender Mentor Home DNA Test Kit', that